



# AROUND NDE

A Publication of the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Human Resources • Dec. '09 / Jan.'10

## Winter Employee Recognition Event

Lincoln area employees gathered in December to welcome new employees and to honor those who achieved NDE years of service milestones. (VR employees were



honored for their years of service at the VR State Staff Conference in October. Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) employees will be honored at their staff meeting in February.) See pages 5-7 for more on the NDE Years of Service honorees.

This year's holiday charity drive benefitted the Good Neighbor Community Center.



The North Star jazz band, under the direction of Dave Sanderson, played some holiday tunes at the employee recognition event.

## Employee Discount Program Launched

LB 167, passed last spring, has paved the way for a state employee discount program. Prior to the passage of the bill, state agencies were prohibited from arranging discounts for their employees.



State Personnel is partnering with WeSave to provide the free employee discount program. Along with many national and online vendors, WeSave also collaborates with local

Nebraska vendors to provide discounts for a variety of services and products. Employees may recommend local vendors to participate in the program.

To register for the Nebraska WeSave program, go to [http://www.wesave.com/ne\\_splash](http://www.wesave.com/ne_splash) and click on "Become a WeSave Member" located in the center of the screen. All employees who activate their membership by Friday, January 22 will automatically be eligible to win a 37 inch Panasonic LCD television provided by WeSave.

**Note:** You may register for WeSave using your state computer through 1/31/10 as long as you do so on non-work time. However, any other activity with the site must be done on personal equipment and non-work time. Provide a non-work email address for WeSave to communicate with you.

# New Employees

Welcome to the following employees who have joined us since the last newsletter was published.



**Karen Buller**  
Office Associate III  
Adult Programs  
November 12, 2009



**Jane Kasik**  
VR Service Specialist  
Columbus  
September 15, 2009



**Kara Michaelson**  
VR Associate  
Norfolk  
August 24, 2009



**Marie Engdahl**  
VR Service Specialist  
Omaha Downtown  
November 23, 2009



**Tonisha Jorgensen**  
VR Service Specialist  
Columbus  
October 1, 2009



**Rachel Smith**  
VR Service Specialist  
Omaha Downtown  
November 30, 2009

## Not pictured:

- ♦ **Brook Harrie**, VR Rehabilitation Specialist, Fremont, December 30, 2009
- ♦ **Cindy Staggs**, VR Service Specialist, North Platte, December 1, 2009
- ♦ **Lindsay Walker**, VR Service Specialist, Omaha Downtown, January 4, 2010
- ♦ **Lyndi Wragge**, VR Rehabilitation Specialist, South Sioux City, January 4, 2010

Watch for their pictures in an upcoming issue.

## New Mileage Rates Effective 1/1/10



Effective January 1, 2010 the standard mileage rate used in reimbursing employees for use of a personal vehicle in conducting state business will be decreased to 50¢ from the current rate of 55¢. All other policies regarding the use of personal vehicles for state business remain the same.

## NDE Team Top Winner in Fall N-Lighten Nebraska Wellness Challenge

The NDE Rehab Raiders, comprised of some VR and ATP employees from the Kearney office, placed third in the Second Flight with 250.1 points. Members of the team included Lupe Stevens, Deb Ottemann, Cindy Powell, Faylin Henricksen, Myron Kouba and Pam Cody (VR) and Georgia Byrn and Corinne Holtz (ATP). Way to go!!!

## Continuation of Health Care Coverage for Children to Age 30



Due to the passage of LB 551 last spring, you may now elect to continue health coverage to age 30 for a dependent child who would otherwise lose coverage when he or she ceases to meet the plan's student criteria or attains an age which exceeds the plan's

limiting age, provided that the following criteria are met:

- The child remains financially dependent upon you (the employee); and
- The child was covered as an Eligible Dependent at the time coverage would have terminated.

### Requesting Continuation Coverage

In order to elect continuation coverage for a child under age 30, you must:

- Complete and return [the State of Nebraska Medical Enrollment Form](#);
- Request a LB 551 Election Form from BlueCross (by calling 800-642-3022) no sooner than 30 days prior to or no later than 30 days after the date on which the child would otherwise lose coverage.

### Payment for Continuation Coverage

The premium for continuation coverage will be equal to the plan's full, unsubsidized single adult premium. You are responsible for paying the full premium each month through payroll deduction. These payroll deductions will be pre-tax.

### Termination of Continuation Coverage

Continuation coverage will terminate if:

- You request coverage to be terminated;
- Your coverage with BCBSNE terminates;
- The covered child:
  - ◊ Marries;
  - ◊ Is no longer a resident of Nebraska;
  - ◊ Receives coverage under another health benefit plan or self-funded employee benefit plan; or
  - ◊ Attains age 30.

Continuation coverage will terminate at the end of the month in which any event listed above occurs. Coverage may not be reinstated once it has been terminated.

**NOTE:** *Your child may be eligible for COBRA coverage. If COBRA coverage is elected, your child is not eligible for this continuation coverage. If you elect this continuation coverage for your child instead of COBRA coverage, COBRA rights will not be available when the continuation coverage ends.*

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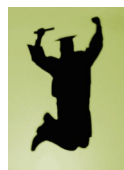
## Holiday Helpers

Lincoln area NDE employees (past and present) showed their holiday spirit by volunteering to assist with the Star City Parade. They are listed below. Thanks for your service to the community!

Peg Kirby (Steering Committee)	
Beth Bolte	Carol Bom
Carolyn Dietz (retired)	Debe Dockhorn
Jeanette Evans	Alice Fournell
Sue Gilleland	Kathy Huff
Bitsy Longan	Cindy Loos
Laurie McEntarffer	Margaret Nehring
Sandy Novotny (retired)	
Shayne & spouse Alan Ortmeier	
Helen Saathoff	Nikki Sander
Alice Senseney	Bonnie Sibert
Brenda Wid	

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## Winter Term Graduate



Jason Keith Wacker, son of Cinda Wacker, graduated from the University of Nebraska-Omaha with a Bachelor of General Studies College of Public Affairs and Community Service, on Friday, Dec. 18, 2009. Jason is a Personal Lines Supervisor with Allied Insurance in Des Moines, Iowa.

Congratulations, Cinda!



# On-Line Meetings: What you Need to Know

Contributed by Mike Kozak

We are all being asked to do more with less. How can we become more efficient and spend less money? One strategy to become more efficient is the use of online meetings or webinars conducted via the internet.



NDE employees may conduct online meetings in the Lincoln NSOB Video Conference Room. (VR is working on implementing a high definition video conference system to connect 10 of the VR offices in the near future.) The state Office of the CIO has provided agencies with licensing for Microsoft's Live Meeting for a nominal fee. During our "research phase" the cost is being covered by the Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation team. A baseline of staff use and costs will be established. The maximum cost for Live Meeting use in the Video Conference Room is currently \$25 per month, regardless of the number of meetings held.

Online meetings can consist of sharing a computer's screen or applications with an audience world-wide, as long as they have access to the internet. You can talk, listen, watch, type and draw. Almost anything you do in a face to face meeting can be done online, except see and interpret body language and tone of voice. However, with current advances in technology, we will soon be able to do that as well. With the use of cameras and microphones, you can talk to your audience, show them images, narrate a PowerPoint presentation, or interact with attendees by collaboratively composing a word processing document.

## **I want to conduct an online meeting. How do I do it?**

Scheduling and pre-planning is crucial for a successful online meeting. First, consider your group size. The Video Conference Room seats 12-15. Reserve the Video Conference Room with the NDE receptionist by calling 402.471.2295 or sending an e-mail to [NDEreceptionist@nebraska.gov](mailto:NDEreceptionist@nebraska.gov). The next step is to visit [InsideNDE](#) and complete the [Live Meeting Request Form](#). In completing the form you will state the date(s), time(s), anticipated audience, online meeting title, and short description of the content/message to be delivered. Once you have finished adding the information, you simply click on the "submit" button to automatically send the form via email to Shayne Ortmeier and Mike Kozak.

Shayne and Mike will meet with you as early as possible before your online meeting to cover the logistics of the event. This process involves logging into the computer in the video conference room and scheduling your "Live Meeting" on the calendar. A department-wide Microsoft Live meeting account is directly tied into an Outlook email and calendar account called [nde.conference01@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.conference01@nebraska.gov). An email message will be created for the meeting host (you) to send to the meeting participants. Shayne and/or Mike will cover the operations of the online meeting software and have you "practice" using it. It would be helpful to have a draft of your PowerPoint slides, Word documents or web pages ready at this stage. Mike or Shayne will assist you during the "live" online meeting, so that your focus will be on doing what you do best, communicating your content to your audience. The intent is to get you started with successful online meetings in a consistent and supported environment.



If the demand for online meetings grows, online meeting access may be added to additional conference rooms or even individual desktops.

## NDE Years of Service Awardees

5 Years



(L to R) Dr. Swisher, Carol Rempp, Chris Cassel, Sue Henry, Cheryl Ashenbach, Cathy Miller, Alice Fournell, Helen Saathoff, Carol Grell, Melody Hobson, Beth Matschullat, Jill Weatherly, Shaun Riley, & Dr. Breed. Not pictured: Lindsey Bartels, Donna Buschkoetter, Nicole Coffey, Jaime Galloway, Angela Gangwish, Valerie Good, Edna Heiden, Caroline Helget, Pat Lemmer, Jana Maresh, Sheri Nitzsche, Carla Osberg, Danielle Redman, Lauren Rock, Cheryl Rodriguez, Amy Rose, Jan Simodynes, Karen Springman, Randy Stevens, Cindy Wagner, Alan Wheat, & Kim Williams.

10 Years



(L to R) Dr. Swisher, Jayne Uher, Tara Ackerman, Sally Shepherd, Micki Iverson, Nikki Sander, Janice Wooge, & Dr. Breed. Not pictured: William Allen, Tracy Harnly, Donnie Johnson, Patsy Shald, & William Sprague.

15 Years



(L to R) Dr. Swisher, Jan Handa, Rhonda Bartels, Susan Dahm, Joel Scherling, & Dr. Breed. Not pictured: Shari Bahensky, Jayne Brunke-Proskocil, Judy Dixon, Krysti Michl, Daphne Moore, Paige Rose-Merrifield, & Angela Thiel.



## NDE Years of Service Awardees

20 Years



(L to R) Dr. Swisher, Sue Martin, Harlan Feather, & Dr. Breed  
Not pictured: Pat Kraemer & Mark Schultz

25 Years



(L to R) Dr. Swisher, Lisa Smith, Steve Baltensperger, Greg Prochazka, & Dr. Breed  
Not pictured: Shirley Baum, Gregg Christensen, & Frank Koch

30 Years



(L to R) Dr. Swisher, Cathy Von Kaenel, Paula Ruff Einemann, Jan Thelen, & Dr. Breed  
Not pictured: Margaret Clark, Janet Drudik, Linda Kamble, Dennis King, Jon Rathjen, Nancy Rowch, & Jack Shepard

## NDE Years of Service Awardees

35 Years



Dr. Swisher, Jacque Rank, Jodi Flores, Joan Orender, Linda Ross, Mary Ann Losh, Roberta Riley Kirkendall, and Dr. Breed. Not pictured: Shelley Dahl, Roger Glawatz, Mike Kissler, Alice Mosier, Crystal VanHousen, & Carol Wipf.

40 Years



Margy Hoffmann

**Congratulations  
to each of the NDE  
Service Award Recipients**



## Workplace Injuries

Do you know what to do if you or a co-worker becomes injured at work?

If you become injured at work, whether at the office or while in travel status, report the incident and injury to your supervisor as soon as possible. This should be done even if the injury appears to be minor. If an injury is not reported when it occurs, and medical treatment is later sought, there may be concerns about whether or not the claim is legitimate.

To report an injury, use the [NDE Report of Alleged Occupational Injury/Illness](#), which is available on Inside NDE/Human Resources/HR Forms. The form must be completed by both the employee and the immediate supervisor, and then sent to Jayne Uher in HR.

Workers' Compensation provides for leave (lost) time and payment of medical expenses related to a qualified work-related injury. However, lost time may not be approved unless the employee is seen by a medical provider. For example, let's say you fall in an icy parking lot while on state business. Initially, you think that only your ego is bruised, but later in the day you decide to go home due to increased pain. You don't go to the doctor, but do submit an injury report. In this scenario, it's likely that you would have to use sick time rather than Worker's Compensation leave.



Many of our accidents are due to slips and falls. Protect yourself by wearing sensible shoes (spikes?) and scanning ahead to note any variations in the surface (e.g., holes, uneven concrete, ice). Inside the office, watch for water on the floor and wipe up any spills immediately.

## Wellness PPO Plan Clarifications

**Q. How do I qualify for the Wellness PPO plan for next plan year (2010-2011) if I am currently enrolled in a State of Nebraska Medical Plan?**

A. Requirements vary by the situation. See below.

Enrolled in Wellness PPO and have completed the Health Assessment — Complete Wellness Program by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Enrolled in BlueChoice, Regular PPO or High Deductible PPO but want to change to Wellness PPO during Open Enrollment — Enroll in and complete a wellness program by March 31<sup>st</sup>. You still have time to complete the Walk this Way program and may enroll by going to [www.liveforlife.net/hfit/wellnessoptions](http://www.liveforlife.net/hfit/wellnessoptions) on non-work time. The other programs take a minimum of twelve weeks so there is not enough time to complete them at this point.

Hire Date on or before 12/01/09 (Effective date of benefits on or before 01/01/10)  
Complete Health Assessment within 15 days of notice in order to be eligible for Wellness PPO for the current (2009-10) plan year. Enroll in and complete your choice of a wellness program by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Hire Date from 12/02/09 through 05/03/10 (Effective date of benefits 02/01/10 - 06/01/10)  
May enroll and retain the Wellness PPO plan until the end of the current plan year (6/30/10). Completion of the Health Assessment and a wellness program is not required. To continue with Wellness PPO plan for the 2010-2011 plan year, completion of the Health Assessment and Biometric Screening by the employee (and spouse if applicable) will be required during April/May 2010.

**Q. How do I qualify for the Wellness PPO plan if I am not currently enrolled in any of the State of Nebraska Medical Plans?**

A. Completion of the Health Assessment and a Biometric Screening will be required for both the covered employee and spouse during a period after Open Enrollment for the 2010-11 plan year.

## Reimbursement Reminders

LB 533 caused changes to employee reimbursement policies. Those have previously been communicated; the latest was a 12/8/09 e-mail from Denise Thege. Here are a few reminders.

- ◆ Reimbursement requests must be submitted to NDE Central Accounting within 60 calendar days from the last date of the trip. Reimbursement requests outside of this timeframe will not be processed.
- ◆ Any meal exceeding \$4.99 will require detailed receipts for all food/meal expenses. The employee may claim up to the IRS meal guidelines. IRS daily and per meal rates may be exceeded with an explanation on the employee's expense document, receipts, and the approval of LC or designee.

